

**** Note:** This interview contains language which some may find offensive. ******

Q: Good afternoon. Today is July 6, 2017. My name is Catherine Wilson and I am here with Murray Miller and we are at the City Hall of Newton. Together we are participating in the Newton Talks Oral History Project which is conducted with the Newton Free Library, Historic Newton and the Newton Senior Center. So welcome, Mr. Miller. Thank you for being here today.

A: I prefer Murray. Mr. Miller was my father...makes me feel old!

Q: There you go! Would you start by telling us what country you were originally from?

A: Canada. Born in Canada.

Q: And why did you leave Canada?

A: In how many words?

Q: As many as you need.

A: Okay. There's two reasons why I left. One is positive reasons, for the US. The other is, unfortunately, some negative reasons why I left Quebec, as opposed to Canada. For now, Quebec is a part of Canada, although there's a huge number of French-speaking people in Quebec who want it to be a separate country. I don't want to get into the negative parts, I want to get into the positive parts. So you can put that down if you want or keep it minimal. But while I was in Montreal, there was a huge separatist movement by the predominantly French people.

There's seven million people in the province of Quebec. Six million are Francophones, only one million are Anglophones, and almost all the Anglophones live in Montreal, so the rest of the province is all French and all wanting out of Canada. And when I was there, it was really bad. And there was a lot of violence by a group called the FLQ, which is the *Fédération. Libre pour Québec*, which means Free Quebec. And there were assassinations and kidnappings, and Pierre Trudeau was the prime minister and had to call in martial law for the federal mail boxes where they put bombs and everything. And it was pretty bad. And in my dental class at McGill, out of the 30 of us that were there and graduated in 1969, only four stayed. The rest left. We ended up with nine in British Columbia, and for our 25th reunion for McGill we had our reunion at the Bay Shore Inn in Vancouver. Why? Because the BC people said, "There's nine of us and there's four of you, and we're not going to Montreal." And we had our reunion there, etcetera. That's the negative part. That pushed it over, but I would have gone anyway, but this made it even more certain. Especially when I have two other classmates from Montreal who were here also. One in Brookline, okay, and one nearby in Newburyport. That's three out of the 30.

So let's go to the positive reasons. It starts with my parents, who always said to me, from when I can remember, "The best thing about Canada is that it borders on the US." They love the fact that you could get in your car in Montreal and drive 50 miles south--50 miles, one hour--and be in either Plattsburgh, New York or Burlington, Vermont. They loved the States, and all our vacations were in the States. If we wanted to see the ocean, we went to Atlantic City or Orchard Beach. If we wanted to see entertainment, we went to New York City. And my earliest memories are those trips--the theater in New York, the shopping, the buzz in New York.

So from the time I was little I always had the feeling that the United States was the best country to be in. So I started to think about the fact that maybe, later on, when I had the chance, I would go. Then, when I was 12, my parents sent me to sleepaway camp in Lake George, New York, to further imbue me. And of course, I met tons of American kids, they all became friends, and to this day many of my friends are still the ones that I made friends with in camp. Some of them I

know since I'm 12, so I know them 60 years. And they've been to me, I've been to them, etcetera. They were mostly from New York. And the other thing that I got from camp was the American college spirit, which we didn't have any of in Canada: college football, college basketball, the college songs like "On, Wisconsin!" Notre Dame, BC, whatever. We don't have that really in Canada. We don't. The other thing I got from them was how they ended up going to schools in different parts of the country, and everything, which we didn't do in Canada, which I never did, either. If you were in Montreal, you went to McGill. If you were in Toronto, you went to the University of Toronto. Now there's more of it, as there's been a crossover, but in my day it was you went to the best school in the city that you lived. We didn't have that many schools, either, compared to the States, and even in Boston there's 150 schools within a hundred miles, and Montreal has like five.

So there were many reasons, so it kept getting more and more imbued to the point where I was pretty convinced that I was going to go to the States for many reasons. But then the most important reason became after I got my dental degree at McGill, I decided if I wanted to get more training, I really needed to go to the States, and I really needed to go probably to Boston. To give you an example, if I may: in Montreal there's one school for orthodontics. It's in French at the Université de Montréal, and there's one school for oral surgery at McGill. There's no school at all, other than that in Montreal for other post-training, like endodontics, which is root canal, pedodontics, which is children's dentistry, periodontics, which is gum disease, etcetera. Boston has three dental schools: BU, Tufts, and Harvard, and all three dental schools have postgraduate programs in every single dental specialty. So in Boston alone, the city of Boston, not spread out all over, in Boston alone, there's three ortho schools, three perio schools, three pedo schools, three oral surgery schools, oral pathology.. I know I forget what I left out but every single one, there's eight specialties and every school has a specialty in every one. And I had a feeling that I was going to go on for more training and that this would be a pretty good place to do it, since there's like three, plus they get people from all over the world. Your interaction is

amazing. In Montreal, again most of the people who were there were Montrealers, it was internequine, it wasn't really spread out.

The other reason was that my wife was studying psychology at the time that we were in college. And when I got my degree in dental school, she was doing her PhD at McGill in psychology, but the opportunities, as you can imagine, in the States were probably ten thousand times more than the opportunities in Canada. So we also knew that for her possible advancement, it was also going to be a probable going to the States. And of course, we applied and eventually we got our approval.

Now, the lucky thing for us, although it's unlucky for her, my wife is the daughter of Holocaust survivors. She was born in a displaced persons camp in Munich, Germany after the war. When we applied to come to the States in the early 1970's, they had different parts of the world with different quotas, so I came under Canada, which was "Western" and my wife came under Germany, which was "Eastern Europe" and her approval came in way before mine would have come in, just by a stroke of luck. So even in the worst circumstances it was a positive that because of the Holocaust she was born in Germany under the East quota and we got it. As a matter of fact, we got it so quickly that we weren't ready to go yet; we had to renew our application and we went the second time we got approval. That's how fast it came. Because she needed to finish school at McGill and was approved before. So we left in January of 1973.

Q: And how old were you?

A: 28. She was 26. The only dispute we had was we didn't know if we were going to Boston, New York, or Washington. We looked carefully, we had people that we knew in all three cities, we studied it from our personal preferences. We also studied whether or not there was better opportunities professionally for each of us, etcetera, and nothing came close to Boston. Nothing! Even though New York City by itself has possibly got more to offer a little bit than Boston does

in big city stuff. There were still more dental schools and more psychology studies because of all the universities and everything so we decided to come here.

Plus, the other thing we loved was what's around Boston. If you think about it, right: Cape Cod--really ugly, especially in the summer! I mean you have to kind of--okay, right: Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, New York. Barbara and I have gone to New York for the day! We live near the Canton train station on 128. We take an early morning train, like at seven in the morning, snooze on the train. My wife loves trains because that's when she catches up on her sleep. Soon as it starts to go *buddaboombuddaboom*, she's gone. She's gone! The only time she wakes up is when it pulls into the station, like what happened to *buddaboombuddaboom*? And we're in New York by 11. We often shop, go to a play or two, go to a concert or two, take the 11 pm/midnight train home, get into Canton at two or three or four in the morning, come home, sleep an hour or two, wash up, go to work. We've done it quite a few times. We did a Barbra Streisand concert at Madison Square Garden. We did the Beach Boys concert and etcetera, etcetera etcetera.

So its location by itself is phenomenal. Because for example, if you consider the most important thing your health and the health of those that you love and your kids, is there a better place to be? Not my opinion. We've had people we know from all over the world that have come here for certain problems. Let's suppose that's the most important thing. Second: education, your mind, right? Is there a better place to be? I don't think so. Let's go to number three: opportunity, finances, etcetera, right? Let's go to four: history. Five: geography. Six: sports. Let's suppose you're a sports fan. Are there four better teams? And then there's college sports. So we hit the jackpot.

Q: I hear a lot of positives in first coming. Was there anything that was hard about leaving Canada?

A: No, the only thing that was hard about leaving Canada is we left in 1973 at the height of the Vietnam War. Every one of our friends who wasn't leaving thought we were totally nuts. How could you possibly go from peaceful Canada that everybody loves to war-involved-for-wrong-reasons United States in Vietnam? And I said "Well yeah, that's a factor, but number one I'm not going to get drafted, and number two it's probably going to be over soon. And number three, yeah, that's a--" Because when I lived in Montreal there were a lot of conscientious objectors that came up to Montreal. There's a lot of people living in Canada approximately my age who came up when they were 20 and came up to Vancouver and Toronto and Montreal to get away from the Vietnam War, for both physical and psychological and emotional reasons and started a new life up there, which was Canada's gain and our loss. Yeah, there's no question that we make mistakes.

One of the things people need to realize about Canada is that 90% of the Canadian people live within 100 miles of the US border. Every big city except Edmonton is within 100 miles of the US border. Starting from the west: Vancouver, Victoria. As we go east, Winnipeg, Toronto, which practically borders on Buffalo, Ottawa, Montreal. All of those cities are all within--and Canadians very often look south as opposed to east-west and they certainly don't look north. As a matter of fact, the only big city that's north of 100 miles is Edmonton and its nickname is Gateway to the North...that's the nickname for it. I mean it's easy to hop in your car and go to the States. I have friends who live in the southernmost part of Vancouver. The last street in Vancouver has a fence after it, then it's the border. It's 58th Street and he lived on 56th Street. Before 9/11 he used to be able to walk across the border to go shopping, to buy gas if he took his car, or buy groceries or whatever at Point Roberts, which was the town that abutted on his town and then walk back and wave at the guard. I know because I stayed at his house and we walked across the border. Amazing, really. He lived in Canada, but he looked south.

So that was another reason. But yes, when I went in '73 it was not popular to go to the States. But that's one incident and even today there's obviously it's not perfect, but the amount of

opportunity, variety....Let me see if I can phrase this properly: we are still--by age of countries, we are still an unbelievably young country. Now Canada is even younger. Canada's only 150 years old this year, 1867. They're having all kinds of celebrations. They became a country in 1867 and they're very proud of it because they were the first country ever to become a free country from an occupier without having to go to war. They were the first country to negotiate their freedom, which is why they still consider themselves the peacekeepers of the world. Whenever you see a UN peacekeeping force there's always a disproportionate number of Canadian soldiers in the peacekeeping force. They figure that's one of their rules: nobody hates Canada, right? There may be a few lone wolves, but nobody hates Canada and for good reason. But it's also in the shadow of the United States and it's a big shadow. And Elliott Trudeau, who was our prime minister, who was immensely popular, said, "I love living next to the US, but it's like sleeping next to an elephant. You're always worried if it's going to roll over and crush you."

And in Canada they have rules. For example, Time magazine has to have a certain percentage of Canadian content in every issue. Every magazine that's international has to have a certain amount of Canadian content. TV stations and the radio stations have to have a certain amount of Canadian content in order to get their license. And that dilutes the quality of the magazine, the TV, etcetera. Canada has a football league called the Canadian Football League. It's in nine cities. On each roster, half of the players have to be Canadian-born, which is actually, in my opinion, prejudicial. Let's suppose I owned a team and I had 50 players and I wanted the 50 best players and the 50 best players were Americans? I wouldn't care. Let's suppose the Red Sox had 28 players and they were all Dominicans like David Ortiz, who would care? But in Canada they care.

They're worried about the elephant rolling over. Now why are they worried about the elephant rolling over? Justifiably, because they know the elephant is pretty big and powerful. Now some people hate the US for the fact that it's powerful. Most people I know love the US because it's powerful and benevolent at the same time. No country donates more to charities every year

worldwide than the United States, ever in history, to earthquakes and tornados and all kinds of other disasters that happen and diseases and sending doctors and everything else than the United States has and does and will.

So it's an amazing combination of power and yet compassion. And we choose to view--luckily my wife and I feel the same philosophically--that we choose to view the compassion. And we think that for the most part the power is used properly, for the most part. Now, of course, there's obviously times when it's not and it's obviously times when hindsight shows that it was not. And sometimes they're too nice, so a dictator in a particular country will say, "Listen, help me out so I can stay in power and if I stay in power because of your help I will be on your side." And they automatically will then back that person without realizing how does it feel to the people who live there? And there's many examples of that and people have written books about how the United States always backs the wrong horse. But very often it's because of the fact that they want people to live in that country with the freedom and the respect for the individual and the caring for--that we have here that that country doesn't. It's a great idea, but you have to figure out how to do it because they have different customs and traditions. Maybe the idea of let's turn Iraq into a democracy is a great idea on paper, but maybe the people there don't know what that is or don't care what that is. You have to think it through.

Q: So just jumping back to my questions: thinking about those traditions, what are some of the traditions that you've noticed are different in the United States?

A: Without question the huge, huge difference is Thanksgiving. There's no Thanksgiving in Canada. There is a day called Thanksgiving Day, which is the same Monday as Columbus Day here. They call it Thanksgiving Day; it has no history. The purpose of it is to get a Monday off. And to give thanks for the fact that you're Canada and everything, but it has no history whatsoever compared to ours. So the biggest difference my wife and I noticed when we came here is how that last week in November is huge here. It's the biggest holiday because no matter

what your religion or non-religion, everybody celebrates Thanksgiving--except the American Indians maybe, to some degree, and I don't blame them--but everybody else does, right?

Q: Do you remember your first Thanksgiving in the United States?

A: Yeah, we were astonished, overpowered by it. I knew that it was big because I had American friends and I knew that it was big because they play football on TV on Thanksgiving and everything else which goes up to Montreal, but to be a part of it, to see the amount of people that leave college and come back and the amount of flying and driving and people getting together. If they get together once a year, that would be like the time of year, etcetera. Truly amazing, the biggest holiday in the States--which is Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday--is zero in Canada. Not less, zero. We have Labor Day. Canada has Labor Day, same day, to some degree, for the same reason. So they have it but to a lesser degree. Obviously, they have 10% of the population that we do. And there are other holidays--Christmas, New Year's. Now we have some other holidays that they don't have in Canada--Memorial Day. They don't have--Now we have a holiday here that's less, we have a holiday here that's called Veterans Day. They have a holiday there, where it's not just Veterans Day, but it's also called Armistice Day. And it's a much, much bigger, more observant, more emotional holiday in Canada than it is here, because in both World Wars Canada was in way, way, way before the United States, because Canada is part of the British Commonwealth. They have an agreement that if Britain declares war, that means Canada declares war. So Britain declares war in 1914 in World War I, Canada is at war in 1914. If Britain declares war September the 3rd, 1939, in World War II, Canada is at war September 3, 1939. So if you compare the two countries, Canada's at war in 1914, US 1917. Canada's at war 1939, the US Pearl Harbor 1941--huge difference. No country lost more boys per capita percentage-wise than did Canada, because the boys were often sent on the front to some of the biggest battles in both wars. So it's a huge, somber--wear your poppy. When you go

to Canada at that time of year everybody is wearing poppies. And here it's less, because here the war wasn't as devastating, even though it was devastating. But it was huge there. And they're still part of the Commonwealth. God forbid, if there's another war and Britain declares war for whatever reason Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etcetera, they're all in at the same time.

The Queen is still the Head of State in Canada; not the Head of Government, the Head of State. So when somebody comes from another country to visit, let's say, the Queen of Denmark, if she comes to Canada to visit, she's not greeted by the Prime Minister, she's greeted by the Queen's representative, who's called the Governor General. Big difference. The Governor General representing the Queen representing Canada greets. In the United States, the president has three jobs: the President is Head of the Executive Branch, he's Head of State and he's Commander-in-Chief. One guy for 350 million people, or one woman for 350 million people. Why anybody would want that job is beyond us, correct? And what it does to the family and everything else, but you know, ego, right? In Canada which is--right?--there's a Governor General, represents the state, the country of Canada, Prime Minister, represents the government, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. All three are different; so three people for one job with 35 million people; one person for three jobs in this country, which is completely overwhelming. If you said to me, "What is the biggest flaw that you think is in this country?" that's what I think it is. I think it should be three separate jobs. I think it's way too much, way too much for one human being, in my opinion. Now, the good new is that my opinion--here's the good news: this is all my opinion. The bad news is my opinion is worthless. But that's my opinion. I don't know how one person can do all three.

Q: It makes me think about your job as an orthodontist. Did you see any differences between practicing in Canada versus the United States?

A: No. As a matter of fact, good question--my dental education at McGill--if you said to me, "Which country has a better education?" the answer is Canada by a wide margin. Because

Canada knows that it's a small country and needs to know what's going on in the world, so we learn a huge amount about the States and about other countries and Mexico and Russia and everything else. Whereas in the States it's way more provincial, where they learn a lot about the States and hardly any Americans, unless they go out of their way, know hardly anything about Canada.

If you ever watch Jeopardy and there's a topic concerning Canada, like Canadian provincial capitals, it's a joke--and these people are on Jeopardy, these are people on Jeopardy! They'll say something like "capital of Saskatchewan" and I can see in their heads they're saying "What is a Saskatchewan?" They won't even know that it's a province, seriously. So there's a huge difference.

Plus, it's old-time education still like the old Victorian English way, what have you. And all of us that left McGill had to take American Boards in order to be able to get our license to practice and we all did terrific. So our dental education, our McGill undergraduate and our McGill dental education, were way, way better than average and all of us who came here trained as dentists, all flourished because we had really good science fundamental training and dental training. Really good. We all did well on our Boards in order to be able to get our license. None of us had to go back because we failed. We did well. So that was a very good question.

But again, it's a smaller, more heterogeneous country and they probably can be able to have more education. I mean some of the problems here are due to all the different types of people coming in with all different languages and everything else. It's huge, it's huge, it's huge, and it's tough. I do English as a Second Language volunteer work at the Jackson/Mann School. I do grades one and two, and almost all of the kids have parents who really don't speak English. And the way they slip is we try to teach them stuff at school, but then there's no continuity when they go home. There's no continuity when they go home, so they slide, especially in the summertime. So it's English as a Second Language in school, but it's not English as a Second Language in the rest

of your life, unless they're playing it on the streets. But a Cambodian can be in an area where all the other kids are Cambodian, and they're speaking Cambodian on the streets. And that's fine, as opposed to English, but they're not living in an area--you understand? And of course, in the Spanish area it's all Spanish, Portuguese it's all Portuguese, etcetera. So that's one of the things they have to overcome here, to some degree. You know, it's pretty tough, it's pretty tough.

Q: Living in Canada, are you fluent in French?

A: I wasn't fluent but I was good. But don't say, "living in Canada." You have to say, "living in Quebec." You have to compartmentalize because the other--There's one province that's officially bilingual in its laws and everything else. Do you know what it is?

___: New Brunswick.

A: She's good! She's good! New Brunswick! Even on its plates it says "New Brunswick Nouveau Brunswick" and they're officially bilingual. They will go French-English, English-French without batting an eye. Quebec? 90% French. And all the rest of Canada, totally English.

The guy who was the first leader of the PQ, which is called the Parti Québécois...The Parti Québécois is the political party in Quebec whose platform is: If we get in, we're getting out. We're going to have a referendum. We're going to have the majority vote to leave, and we'll negotiate with Canada the terms, like Brexit. You can now call it "Quexit" if you want to. Q-U-E-X-I-T. Quexit. And he wrote a book. First he was part of the liberal provincial government, he was part of it, and then he started seeing how the French people weren't, in his opinion, being represented properly. They weren't given the same opportunities, the French language was disappearing, the French culture was disappearing.

He formed his own party, he caught on with a lot of people, he did quite good. And he wrote a book, and I have to use a word, the name of the book--it's called "The White Niggers of America." And he talked about how the French people were treated in Canada the way that black people were treated in the States. So he kept saying to his followers, "We are the white...of America," which really hit home with them and which was, to some degree, a valid point. He said, "If I'm in Calgary, Alberta and I'm a French-speaking Canadian, how at home do I feel? There isn't an ounce of French out there. It's an official language, theoretically, but if I'm speaking only French, I'm doomed if I go into a restaurant. I'm doomed if I need directions, whatever..." And he made a very valid point. Because I've seen that in Maine a lot, where some French people come from Quebec and they come for vacation and everything and they're paralyzed when they go into a restaurant, they're pointing to pictures. Now that's different because French isn't an official language in Maine. Although there's tons of people--by the way, there's a town, Biddeford, Maine where there's still more French than English. There's still more people who are Francophones than Anglophones. And some other towns are like half and half, in Lowell and all those were in those days. And there's tons of people with French-Canadian names, they came down for the opportunity.

So the point was, his point wasn't invalid and that there's no question that a French-Canadian who is unilingual is totally out of sorts if he goes to the rest of Canada. So I can see that from their viewpoint, but their logic as to how to improve their lot is bad, because if they make the whole province unilingual, they isolate themselves even more, they become more exclusive instead of inclusive. The right philosophy would have been--and this is why I was really unhappy with the way they went about it--would have been to force all English people, especially in Quebec, to take French from grade one right through high school and have a literacy test at the end of high school and all French kids to take English the same way, so that after one generation, one generation, 20 years, everybody growing up in Quebec, English, French, both, neither, Portuguese, immigrant, whatever, would have both languages.

They could have had a Switzerland in Canada, in Quebec and they blew it! And they blew it. They had--history dealt them a hand, but they had the opportunity of English, two of the great cultures and languages and histories of the world and they had a chance to have both and they blew it. Now, what's saving it is the children of the separatists don't agree with their parents. The children of the separatists who aren't as angry, aren't as fiery, aren't as unilanguage-focused, and know about TV and Canada and everything else, they want to learn English so they can get better jobs.

And I go to Montreal very often to visit my mother and every time I cross the border the person at the Canadian border, who works for Canada, who speaks both languages, has a French name. Savard, St. Hilaire, Beauchamp, whatever. And they say, "Where are you from?" and all that, and you can tell there's a bit of an accent and they have a terrific job. So it's fading to some degree because they understand that even if they hate the English and even if they hate the English language, it's something you have to do and have to learn in order not to be an island of French in a sea of English. They've accepted the unwanted reality and are working with it, whereas their parents wouldn't accept the unwanted reality, and that killed it a lot. They could have had--as great as Montreal is, which it is, by the way, as great as Montreal is, it could have been world famous à la Switzerland, the greatest bilingual city in the world. Because you know after Paris, the second-largest French-speaking city in the world is..? By population. The second-largest French-speaking city in the world after Paris is Montreal, larger than all the other French cities in population. So they could have really had something special, both in numbers and in education and everything.

And that was one of the things that really bugged me, a lost opportunity. Because I was fairly good in French, to answer your question, and when I got out of dental school I went--you can check this with my wife when she comes separately--to Berlitz. You know what Berlitz is? It's a

language school, and I took French so I could be better, especially French language related to dentistry, so I could converse with my French patients in their language, as opposed to them having to converse with me in my language, out of courtesy. And plus, I love it. I mean, what's wrong with learning another language? It's good for your brain, it's good for you, it's good when you travel. But now it's faded, obviously, I don't use it as much. So I have no resentment towards learning French and feeling comfortable in it, but they had huge resentments towards learning English. And they actually wanted to pass laws banning their kids from taking English. Their kids had to actually say, "No way, we're not participating in that at all." They actually wanted that. They weren't really thinking about the future, they were just thinking about their present anger. We hate the English, we hate the English language. But it's the language of computers. It's the language of aviation, the pilots all--Malay Airways, their pilots all have to speak English when they're coming into the airports--and it's the language of medicine and dentistry. If you go to the Université de Montréal library, all their books are in English, because most of this research and all that type of stuff is done in English.

So, anyway that that was one of the reasons, again, unfortunately. There is a rule, for example, this is amazing--you know the Montreal Canadiens? They always call the hockey team the Montreal Canadians. They are not the Montreal Canadians, they are the Montreal *Canadiens*. It's "i-e-n-s," not "i-a-n-s." It's not "Canadian" it's "*Canadien*." It's an "e," not an "a." It's a French-Canadian word, not an English word. And they have a rule that their coach and their general manager have to be bilingual. So if a guy is the best hockey mind in the world and he speaks only English, they will not hire him.

Q: I have a couple of more questions I want to make sure I get to before we run out of time. One of them is: how did you settle into Newton specifically, out of all the places outside of Boston?

A: Well, as I told you, my wife and I visited the cities before we came here. We had people in all different--I had three friends in post-graduate school in Boston. I also knew some other people

who were dentists in Boston from meetings that I had gone to. And I went around to--whatever. And our first thing that we did was because our friends lived in Brookline, we rented in Brookline near them and we were very happy with that and we were going to stay there and then we got a notice that said "Guess what? Next year we're going condominium and we're giving you first dibs and you can buy your condominium for \$48,000, special rate." And we said "\$48,000! You've gotta be out of your mind! For that amount of money we can have a big house!" So then of course we had friends who lived in different places, we went to look and everything. They introduced us to a couple of real estate brokers and we ended up in Newton with a bunch of our friends, who are still in Newton, à la Carl Spector. So that's how we ended up doing that and everything. We didn't come here babes in the woods. We knew people, we had connections and what have you. By the way, the \$48,000 now just sold recently for \$650,000. But on the other hand, our house in Newton cost us \$51,000 with a big yard and everything else and now it's worth...with a lot of zeroes, apostrophes and zeros and keep going.

Q: What have been some of the biggest challenges or successes in your move and your choice to live here?

A: All successes. We're thrilled to be here. We're thrilled to be--we became Americans the day we could. We applied for citizenship, the day we could. We became citizens the day we could at Faneuil Hall. I had goosebumps and we still do. And it's one of the highlights of our day, ever.

Q: Can you tell me what that--

A: And I've gone there a few times just to witness it now. You know, they do it again now at Faneuil Hall. It's just--you become part of the greatest experiment in the history of mankind, which is: can a country be incredibly powerful, incredibly influential, and still care about the rights of the individual? It's a hard combination because when you have power, you know, they say something like, you know, "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." So if

the United States has absolute power as a country, how come it doesn't corrupt absolutely the rights of its citizens? It's an amazing concept to have power but to use it for the good.

There's an amazing scene in the movie Schindler's List where one of the Nazi guys just picks off Jews for fun whenever he can. And he befriends one of the Jews because the guy helps them make boots and everything else, and he sort of tolerates the guy. And the guy says to him, "You know, power isn't being able to sit there and have the gun and just pick off people. Power is being able to have the power to do that and not do that--that's what real power is, not what you're doing, which is bullying and everything, but the ability to do that and have the power as a human being not to do that." And that's a great line, that's a great line. And that's to me the US a lot.

And then of course, you can't do better than Massachusetts, in our opinion. You can't do better than Boston in every way possible. I can't tell you how many times a year my wife and I say to each other, "Boy, are we lucky that we picked here!" I mean, we just fell into it. I mean, we chose a bit, we knew Boston, New York or Washington, we might have been happy in New York. I think we would have. My daughter lives there, lives a very nice life. My friends in Washington are fine, they mostly live in Potomac and what-have-you right around Washington, D.C., not like right in Washington. We would have been happy probably, we knew what we wanted: Eastern, big city America.

And that worked out great and politically we're thrilled because we're both bluer than blue. Can't help you with that. The bluer we are, the happier I am. If Obama got 65% of the vote, I would have liked him to get 85% of the vote. So if you talk about challenges, I can't talk to some friends

in other parts of the country. My wife is bluer than blue than blue psychologically and everything else and she has a sister that lives in a small town in Idaho who feels the same way that she does politically and is afraid to open her mouth and just vents and spews on the phone with her sister. She had to go there because her husband got a fantastic job at the University of Idaho with tenure

and everything. So she's there and she's a nurse at the hospital but she says it's a completely different world, completely different. There he got 35% of the vote and the only places where he got votes were in the three university towns, there's three universities in Idaho. You can imagine how well he did in rural Idaho.

Q: Right. So one thing--one difference you have in Massachusetts is being Canadian. Do people--are people surprised when when they learn that or--

A: Well, first of all, they still detect an accent. Second of all, my wife and I still say "eh?" way too often instead of "huh?" But also I guess many people don't know, we also have--the majority of our friends in Massachusetts are Montrealers, ex-Montrealers. As she knows as I told her I have a couple of classmates that are here, we've stayed friendly, and Dr. Spector and what have you. I must have, I must know--we had a few years ago a McGill Alumni Reunion. We sent--we called McGill in Montreal and told them that we wanted to have a McGill alumni organization get-together and raise money for McGill in Boston, would you please send us names of alumni that you have that are living in Boston? There would be three kinds--right? People from Boston who went to McGill who came back, people from Montreal or wherever else that ended up staying in Boston, or people who maybe knew somebody from McGill, married them and that person went and they went along with them. They sent us 800 names! 800 names for a small school like McGill. And the event that we had which was at the Charlestown Museum where the Old Ironsides is--there's a museum there that you can rent--we had 300 people all related to McGill, not Canada, just even little McGill. McGill Alumni Association. It's called Friends of McGill of the US. That's the name of the organization. Friend of McGill of the United States. And we had 300 people. And we brought in Montreal food.

Q: So what advice would you give to someone who is moving from Canada?

A: Move as soon as you can and become a citizen as soon as you can. You'll be part of the greatest experiment ever. The quantity, quality, variety, influence and opportunity of this country have never been matched anywhere in the world. The amount of research being done, the amount of schools--there's over 3,000 colleges and universities. 3,000! You have to be kidding me! Of all different niches and everything. I mean, we had a friend whose son wanted to be a filmmaker. I mean, he has a choice of 14 schools he could go to that specialize in filmmaking--you know, come on! Etcetera, etcetera.

Then the variety of geography. Let's suppose you're a Canadian and you hate the winter, you have to leave the country. It's not Canada's fault, right? But you know how many Canadians there are in Florida and Arizona and in California in the winter? You know how many snowbirds there are? They had to pass a law that if you stay 180 days or more in the US and you're a Canadian citizen, you end up having to pay US taxes. So my sister, for example, has a house in Boca Raton, Florida and she literally counts the days and stays 180 days in the winter and then goes back, reluctantly, not happy about it. You could stay...but you could see the Americans thinking about that, "If you're going to stay here a while and everything, then pay us some taxes." You know, water, sewer, everything else. 180 days is the rule.

So you want to go west? How far is Hawaii--west enough for you? Samoa, Guam, right? You want to go east? Virgin Islands, St. Croix--far enough east? And south? Barb and I have been to the border where New York and Vermont meet Canada and we've been to the border where San Diego meets Mexico. It's an amazing country, geographically and in every other way you can think of.

So it's one of the best things we ever did. I thank my parents. They were right. Not--please--not to degrade Canada. Canada's "A"--is that good enough? But the US is "A plus plus plus plus." It's number one in the major leagues of countries by a wide margin, then there's a whole bunch of other teams tied for second: Sweden and Holland, and I mean, if you want, Britain, right? Israel,

South Africa...I mean there's tons of countries that are really good countries. They're all about the same with pluses and minuses, but this one here is heads and shoulders above the rest, in my opinion. And again, it's only my opinion.

But I'm here and I'm thrilled that my kids are here and I'm thrilled that my grandkids are here. Although I did tell my daughters, if I may, that they should still take out--I still have a Canadian passport and I told my daughters to apply for Canadian citizenship and get their Canadian passports, just to have it in case. You never know. We're Jewish and Jews, unfortunately, are very aware of the possibility of something bad happening and having some place to go to. Unfortunately, it's part of our psyche, based on what happened especially in World War II. She's nodding, so she understands where I'm coming from. So we always feel that doesn't hurt to have an insurance policy, that if you have to pack up and leave in 24 hours because the government is turned against you rather than protecting you, it's a good thing to have someplace to go to. Keep your Canadian citizenship. Not that I think it's going to happen. The chances of it happening are one in a thousand. But is it one? Yeah. Could it happen? Yeah. Because the Jews in Germany were sure that it was going to blow over, that it was just one guy foaming at the mouth and people would come to their senses. They spoke the same language, they had the same last names, they had fought in World War I for Germany, they were positive that they were part of the population, and that what's the worst that could happen? Well, who imagined that? So you have to learn from history sometimes to be careful. So in our group of people, we always have that way in the back somewhere. The only country where we're masters of our fate is Israel. That's the only country where we're the majority. In the rest of the world, we're guests and we hope that the people who own the home where we're staying are going to continue to be benevolent hosts, and so far there's no more benevolent host than the US. Jews in the US have never done better, ever. But you never know.

Q: Well, we're all up against our time, but I wish we could keep talking. This has been fabulous, Murray. Thank you so much for coming.

A: I really appreciate the chance to say how I feel about this country.

Q: Yeah, oh we really appreciate it--

A: And my friends feel the same way.

Q: It's meant a lot to us and we're really happy we can include you in a collection of stories about experiences coming to this country.

A: It's important to understand it's 99% positive why I came and only one percent negative with that separatism stuff. I would have come anyway. I was coming before separatism, but I was really coming during separatism and here I am. And a lot of other guys who never even thought about it packed their bags and left because they didn't feel welcome. If you were an Anglophone and mostly they're not Jewish, by the way--most of them just didn't feel that they would be welcome to be English in Quebec and they left. Four out of 30 stayed, and one of them was a Korean.

Q: Well, thank you again.

A: Thank you for calling me and arranging it and everything.

END OF INTERVIEW